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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Florida Murder Suspect Indicted in Arizona for ID Theft

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Aug. 10, 2006) A man wanted for murder in Florida and a female companion, who were living in Avondale, were indicted this week in Phoenix on ID theft charges stemming from an investigation conducted by the Phoenix Identity Theft and Economic Crimes Task Force.

Andrew George Walters, 35, and Carole Loraine Ruffin, 35, were indicted Aug. 7 by the State Grand Jury. They are charged with one count of fraud, three counts of aggravated taking the identification of another, two counts of taking the identification of another and one count of unlawful possession of an access device. Walters was also charged with resisting arrest.

Ruffin was charged with four additional counts of aggravated taking the identification of another, two counts of taking the identity of another and one count of attempted taking the identity of another.

Walters has an outstanding arrest warrant from Florida and was interviewed by Orange County Sheriff's Office officials last week. The Florida charges against Walters include one count of first-degree murder in a 1997 fatal shooting in West Orange County, Fla., and two counts of attempted first-degree murder. He is being held without bond pending extradition to Florida.

The couple had been renting a house in Avondale when they were taken into custody.

According to the indictment, Walters and Ruffin used the identities of victims to open accounts at Chase Bank and other financial institutions. The indictment also indicates that the couple had possession of personal identifying information for about 200 people, more than 100 credit cards, and counterfeit or stolen documents.

"Andrew George Walters, a murder suspect who has evaded capture since 1997 has been taken off the streets thanks to an identity theft investigation conducted by the Phoenix Identity Theft and Economic Crimes Task Force," said William P. Atkins, Inspector in Charge for the Los Angeles Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS).

The task force, lead by the USPIS, includes the Phoenix Police Department, the Arizona Department of Public Safety and the Attorney General's Office.

Walters and Ruffin will be arraigned in Maricopa County Superior Court at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 16 before Court Commissioner Eartha Washington. If convicted of all charges, Walters faces up to 54 years in prison, and Ruffin faces up to 123 years in prison. Assistant Attorney General Todd Lawson is prosecuting this case.

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